



March 15, 2022

Testimony Re: Raised HB 5383 AN ACT CONCERNING ASSOCIATION HEALTH PLANS

Stephanie Amato, President, Connecticut Benefit Brokers, A Chapter of NAHU

Chairman Lesser, Chairwoman Wood, members of the committee, my name is Stephanie Amato, and I am president of the Connecticut Benefit Brokers, A Chapter of NAHU (CTAHU). On behalf of my colleagues and members we support the proposal to authorize Association Health Plans (AHPs).

We believe AHPs are one of the approaches proposed this session that will help lower the cost of health insurance benefits. AHPs allow businesses to group together for greater purchasing power to obtain lower rates for their members.

This would also be another tool to allow businesses in Connecticut to be competitive. Association plans were authorized by the Federal government in 2017 and since then, many states have allowed their implementation and are attracting Connecticut employers to their plans.

Every day our members work with small business owners struggling to find affordable health insurance options for their employees. In some circumstances these AHPs may provide options that are simpler and could provide cost savings and increased benefits that are specific to their membership. For example, an industry specific organization may be able to tailor their benefits or wellness programs in a manner that would appeal directly to their specific profession.

While certainly not the answer for everyone (there never is a one-size-fits-all approach to health insurance) we do believe allowing AHPs can offer some small businesses and their employees an affordable and attractive option.

The legislature has recognized the value in Association Health Plans before. In 2010 Connecticut allowed for association plans for municipalities in the form of a consortium through Public Act 174.

By expanding the tools available for employers to offer meaningful coverage, the state provides a business-friendly option that allows local employers to compete with the job markets of neighboring states.

If this legislation is approved, our CTAHU licensed health insurance benefit brokers stand ready to continue our work in advising our clients across the state on their best options and look forward to adding these new plans as an addition to their choices.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Stephanie Amato
President, Connecticut Benefit Brokers, A Chapter of NAHU (CTAHU)